1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the women-folk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *felāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

 PIT.

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead. The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will say, "*Khud kaḥk 'ala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation. It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

In another part of Egypt where I have attended this ceremony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-sīyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3.

[2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

797 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [269] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 ● [769] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where 'Abdu l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭîf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [152] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭîf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 788 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 766 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected ●769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 797 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

792 On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 787 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 685 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

COPTIC SAINTS

he had done this he would first find a very deep well, and westward from this he would find a large quantity of bricks, enough for the building of the church; while to the east he would find piles of white lime to be used in the construction of the building. To the east again of the lime, if he dug down to the depth of half a metre, he would find a heap of money, sufficient to pay for the entire building of the church, including the wages of the workmen employed. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he was to start at once to build the church, and that if he disobeyed his orders he would be killed. Then Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi vanished.

The *farrāsh* set to work to dig up the plot indicated, and found everything as the saint had told him, including the well, which he discovered first.

The church still stands on this spot, but the old *farrāsh* who built it has, of course, been dead for a long time, and since his day the building has been enlarged by one of the Coptic bishops. The well is still to be seen within the precincts of the church.

Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi is a very popular Coptic saint, and he is venerated not only by the Christians, but also by many of the Muslims, who have, so I was told, the greatest faith in him, and who often appeal to him for aid in time of need.

Egladiūs el-ʿAzab is a saint of great repute. Several churches in Egypt are dedicated to him, and his body lies with those of four other saints in a special edifice set apart for them in a large town in Upper Egypt. The bodies of these five holy men are still in a good state of preservation, though they have all been dead for a long period of time. Each body lies in a coffin. Egladiūs el-ʿAzab was very young when he died, having been killed, so I was told, by the Arabs because he was a Christian. He wears a wide ribbon of gold across his breast, and a gold earring in one ear. A special festival is held every year in his honour, for the due celebration of which the people make large quantities of bread, and bring cattle, which are slaughtered at the churches. The bread and meat are distributed among the poor, who flock in great numbers on these occasions to all the churches dedicated to him.

In a certain village in Asyūṭ Province there is a Coptic church dedicated to Māri Egladiūs el-ʿAzab. A man who lives close to the sacred building was, on one occasion, entertaining a Muslim friend who had arrived from another province. While they were engaged in conversation together the talk turned on to the subject

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVI

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

796 THE *Mūlid en-Nebi*, the annual celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, is of course the most important of all the festivals held in honour of Muslim saints. However, I shall content myself here with a description of some of the annual *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held in honour of local village saints which I have attended myself during my six years' sojourn in Egypt.

346 778 531 The sheikh Umbārak is buried in a village in Middle Egypt, and a whitewashed domed building has been erected above his grave. One or two of the outside walls of his tomb are, as is customary, decorated with pictures descriptive of the pilgrimage to Mecca,[1] roughly sketched in red and blue paint, the remainder being inscribed with passages from the Ḳorān. Around the dome are small, what might almost be called clerestory windows, in each of which a lighted candle is placed every night. There is a female 'servant' attached to this sheikh, who is supposed to keep the tomb in order, receive the donations of devotees, and light the candles every evening. One wonders how she manages to carry out this work satisfactorily, as she is quite blind!

[212] [794] [782]

796 769 The *mūlid* held in honour of the sheikh Umbārak takes place in April and begins early in the afternoon, on the morning of which day similar festivals are inaugurated in certain neighbouring villages in honour of their own particular sheikhs.

At about two o'clock a large crowd collected in the vicinity of the sheikh's tomb, several people, chiefly women, seating themselves around it. The blind servant received donations from the faithful on behalf of the sheikh, part of the time having the sheikh's flag wrapped around her (Fig. 141). As the donors presented their gifts they recited the *Fātiḥah* in low and rapid tones. In the road which ran past the burial-ground, and in the adjacent palm-grove, the holiday-makers engaged in friendly conversation or indulged in various amusements (Fig. 142); and along the roadside booths

[794] [788]

[1] See p. 245, Fig. 140.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

had been erected, wherein butchers and vendors of sweetmeats, toys, and other wares plied their trade, to all appearance doing excellent business (Fig. 143).

Eggs dyed a bright cerise or yellow are a special feature of all these *mawâlid*, and those who sold them attracted a considerable number of customers. These coloured eggs, which are also sold on the Coptic Easter Monday, are used for two games, which are played as follows. In one game two boys or men take part, each grasping an egg in his hand. One of them knocks his egg against that of his opponent, and the man whose egg is not cracked is regarded as the winner and takes the cracked egg of his adversary. In the other game several eggs are arranged in a row on the ground, and a number of men sit at a certain distance away from them. Each in turn rolls an egg toward the row of eggs facing him, and the man who first succeeds in cracking one of them wins the lot. These games are played by large numbers of people at all *mawâlid*, but never by women and girls. Coloured eggs are used for games, in many cases similar to these, in various parts of Europe, especially in the Balkan states. Again, in some of the Northern counties of England coloured eggs are still used in a game played on Easter Monday which closely resembles the second Egyptian game.

FIG. 141. FEMALE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK, WRAPPED IN THE SHEIKH'S FLAG ON THE DAY OF HIS MŪLID

There were other attractions at this *mūlid* of the sheikh Umbārak. In the palm-grove a conjurer in one part and a poet

[Text continues on p. 255]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796
769

FIG. 142. MÛLID OF THE SHEIKH UMBÂRAK: SCENE IN THE PALM-GROVE

[443]
[342]

FIG. 143. VENDORS' BOOTHS AT A SHEIKH'S MÛLID

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

(*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152) in another had collected large and interested audiences. The poet was accompanied in his recitations by a woman—and sometimes by two or three men as well—who beat a single-membrane drum. Peep-shows also contributed to the amusement, the pictures shown usually representing favourite national saints and heroes and heroines. Lastly, roughly made little cars hung on wheels, which turned round and round on a horizontal axis, were much patronized by the children (Fig. 144).

A special sheikh of this district, later to conduct the *zikr* (see

FIG. 144. SWINGS, WHEELS WITH HANGING CARS, AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS AT A SHEIKH'S MŪLID

below) in honour of the sainted Umbārak, paraded through the crowd on a donkey, preceded by three men carrying large banners decorated with various designs and inscriptions, and by musicians playing on cymbals and a double-membrane drum. One of the banners belonged to the sheikh Umbārak, but the others came from the tombs of sheikhs in neighbouring villages. Such banners are always carried in procession on the occasion of a *mūlid*, and the men who bear them advance with dancing steps instead of an ordinary walk.

It should be mentioned here that a *zikr* is a kind of religious dance performed by men and older boys only; the women and girls never take part in it. A detailed description of it is given later on.

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

In spite of the heat, millions of flies, and clouds of dust, the festival of the sheikh Umbārak was conducted with the utmost good humour, and the behaviour of the crowds was perfect. It came to an end at about seven o'clock.

On the following day the annual *mūlid* of the sheikh Ṣabr was celebrated at his village, which is most picturesquely situated on the bank of the Yūsuf Canal. As I have stated in Chapter XV, this sheikh is much venerated, not only in his own village, but in villages for many miles around. I have been present at his *mūlid* on two or three occasions, and each time large crowds have assembled to do him honour.

The festival begins in the morning at about eleven o'clock, and a number of people joined me as I rode through the fields on my way to the village. Upon these occasions a brisk trade is always carried on, and piles of brightly coloured sweets are exposed for sale, together with toys, cheap ornaments, dates, and other delicacies. The vendors seat themselves under rough booths, which they erect on the spot, and under which they can take shelter from the fierce rays of the sun.

When I arrived a large *ẓikr* was taking place under the shade of the branches of the sacred tree. It was executed by a number of men forming a circle round the sheikh who conducted this religious exercise. The men swayed rhythmically from side to side, nodded their heads, or bent backward and forward as they pronounced the name of Allāh over and over again. The presiding sheikh beat time by clapping his hands, while now and then a *fiḳīh* would chant passages from the Ḳorān. The ceremony was conducted with great earnestness and solemnity, but some of the performers became so worked up with religious fervour that from time to time they leaped into the air, and finally fell on the ground from exhaustion.

Close to where this religious performance was taking place was to be found the usual large wheel, with its hanging seats. Here the children had congregated, all of them clamouring for a ride, as they are to be seen doing about the whirligigs and swings provided at the fairs in England.

At another spot a poet had collected a large audience, which listened with evident enjoyment while he gave his recitations to the accompanying beats of two tambourines and a shallow, single-membrane drum (*cf.* p. 266, Fig. 152).

The banners were much in evidence at this festival, and I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Coots MR10

managed to secure a good photograph of them and of their bearers as they stood grouped under the sheikh's tree together with a few musicians and the inevitable crowd (Fig. 145).

These *mawâlid*, when well conducted, are quite harmless, and are one of the very few pleasurable excitements enjoyed by the peasants. Most of those at which I have been present have been quite orderly, but much depends on the officer in charge of the district in which

FIG. 145. SHEIKH'S BANNERS AND THEIR BEARERS

they are being held. If he is neglectful, and does not see that order is kept and objectionable shows prohibited, the festivals can degenerate into anything but wholesome recreation for the people.

The modern Egyptian *mawâlid* show striking resemblances to English fairs, especially as celebrated during the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century. These too were associated in every case with a saint, and also with trading. Our modern fairs, though often still named after the saints in whose honour they were originally held, have now lost their religious significance.

A monastery in Middle Egypt situated on the high-desert edge, which at this spot approaches close to the Yûsuf Canal, is one of a number dedicated to Mâri Girgis, our St George (Fig. 146). The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

remain for the whole week, engaging rooms for themselves beforehand if they are not lucky enough to have friends in the neighbourhood with whom they can stay. Certain proceedings which I witnessed at this festival, happily absent from most of the village *mawālid* for Muslim sheikhs which I have attended, would, I fear, have met with the strong disapproval of the good St George!

Ramaḍān is the month of the Muslim fast. From an hour before sunrise till after sunset no food must be eaten by the faithful, and, what is a severer privation in a hot, dry climate like that of Egypt, not a drop of water must pass their lips. I am always filled with admiration for the courageous and cheerful way in which the poor *fellāḥīn* endure this most trying penance, carrying on their tasks with the same light-heartedness that they are wont to display at all times. It is a very serious strain on the fortitude of all those who have to work, and it is especially trying to those officials who observe the fast strictly, and yet whose duties oblige them to travel on tours of inspection or for the investigation of crimes.

On the day following the termination of Ramaḍān, *el-'Id eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* (Little Festival) is held. It is a day of great rejoicing and is observed as a public holiday, for the trying fast is over at last. Friends visit each other to express their good wishes, and all classes endeavour to show special hospitality in honour of the occasion. The poor are never forgotten on this day of rejoicing, and gifts of money and food are distributed by those who are in more fortunate circumstances.

On this day the dead also are held in remembrance and most families repair to the cemeteries early in the morning, the women carrying baskets on their heads containing bread, dates, and other sweet things, which are distributed in the names of their dead relatives among the poor (Fig. 147). Palm-branches are laid on the graves, or are broken into shorter lengths and stuck upright in front of the tombs. *Fuḳahā* (see p. 172) are always present on these occasions, as most people engage them to recite by the graves, paying them for their services with gifts from their baskets, and sometimes with money also. The rest of the day is given up to festivities, which are continued for two days more.

El-'Id el-Kibīr (the Great Festival, held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Isaac) follows forty days later, and a public holiday of three or four days' duration is observed. Quantities of grain are given as gifts to the poorer folk by those who possess

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

land. Such suppliants are constantly arriving to receive their donations during the whole of the first day of this festival, while coffee, sweets, and cakes are distributed to other friends who come to pay visits of congratulation. Prayers are offered in the mosques, which are filled with worshippers. On the first day of this festival all who can afford it sacrifice a ram (thus calling to mind the ram substituted for Isaac) outside the house, and sprinkle some of its blood on the house-door.[1]

FIG. 147. A CEMETERY CROWDED WITH VISITORS ON THE DAY OF THE LITTLE FESTIVAL

Once when visiting the house of some of my village friends I found that not only was such a sacrifice in prospect, but another ram was also to be killed for the following reason. The woman's only son had been very ill some two or three years before, and in her despair she had made a vow to some sheikh that if her son recovered she would kill a ram as a thank-offering on the first day of *el-ʿĪd el-Kibīr* every year for the rest of her life (Fig. 148). The blood of this animal, however, was not sprinkled on the door.

Again on this festival the cemeteries are visited by crowds of people, many carrying palm-branches to be placed on the graves.

[1] *Cf.* the ancient Semitic custom of sprinkling blood on the doorposts, exemplified in one of the ceremonies of the Jewish Passover.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SOME ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Gifts of food are distributed by the visitors in the names of their dead; in fact, the funerary customs observed at this festival are identical with those connected with *el-'Id es-Sughaiyar*.

The first day of *Khamasin*, which falls in April and is called *Shemm en-Nesim* (the Smelling of the Zephyr), is observed in the following way. Early in the morning a bunch of onions, or a single onion, is hung up above the house-door. The owners of the house, more especially the women, may smell the onions before

FIG. 148. RAM TO BE SACRIFICED AT THE GREAT FESTIVAL IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A VOW

The mother who made the vow stands beside the animal.

hanging them up. I was told that in some parts of Upper Egypt the onions, after being hung up, are squeezed or beaten with a stick, so that the juice from them may fall on the threshold. I have also been told that this custom is observed because it is believed to make people strong. I have heard, moreover, that in other parts of the country on the night before the festival people hang a bunch of onions over the places where they sleep. Early on the following morning each person on rising immediately takes his or her bunch of onions, smells it, and then throws it over his shoulder, after which he walks out of the house without looking back. My informant said it is believed that all evils are

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *Ṭala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Îd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Îd el-Kibîr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yôm el-Ghiṭâs*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *Ṭala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ṭulû'*, used in the combination *ṭulû' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ṭala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ṭala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḫrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the wag-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

---

[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 172.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhêt*, p. 83.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

Immediately below this text, and intimately connected with it, four women are to be seen, each carrying a basket of bread on her head and holding a vessel containing water in her right hand.[1] Such representations of men and women going in procession to the cemetery loaded with provisions are very common in tomb-chapels, especially in those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Very conspicuous in these scenes are the baskets containing articles of food, generally borne on the heads of women as they are at a modern *Ṭala'*, and of exactly the same shape as those used for that purpose to-day. A similar text to that just quoted, and dating probably from the Sixth Dynasty, reads as follows: "A coming-forth-unto-the-voice for him in his tomb-chapel at the monthly and half-monthly festival, on the firsts of the seasons, the firsts of the months, and the firsts of the weeks."[2] In later times this weekly offering seems often to have degenerated into a mere pouring out of water, accompanied by the recitation of formulæ, a custom still surviving in Lower Nubia and parts of Upper Egypt.[3] With regard to this weekly graveside ceremony, it might be pointed out that Isis of Philæ was supposed to perform it at the 'Holy Place' on the island of Bīgeh, the burial-place of Osiris, doubtless in the capacity of a wife visiting the grave of her dead husband.[4]

Prt occasionally occurs in its funerary significance without the following *r-ḫrw*, and then it seems generally to be accompanied by the attribute *'lt*, 'great'—*i.e.*, 'the great going forth,' or, to use the modern equivalent, 'Great *Ṭala'*.'[5] For example, a man prays that on the day in which he departs this life there may be "a great going forth of my fellow-townsfolk."[6] The same expression is used in *The Decree of Canopus*, where it is employed to denote the annual commemoration of the death of the deified Berenike.[7] In the Greek version of this last-mentioned inscription *prt 'lt* is rendered *μέγα κόπτος*, 'great lamentation,' an indication that those taking part in this 'going forth' wailed at the graveside, and probably also on their way there and back, as is the custom in modern times.

[1] C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–58), vol. ii, Pl. 5.
[2] A. M. Blackman, *loc. cit.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, with note 4 and the following pages.
[5] Used without the attribute *'lt* when denoting the 'procession' of Upwawet in the Osirian mysteries; see H. Schäfer, *Die Mysterien des Osiris in Abydos* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 11.
[6] H. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[7] *Ibid.*

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT.

In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

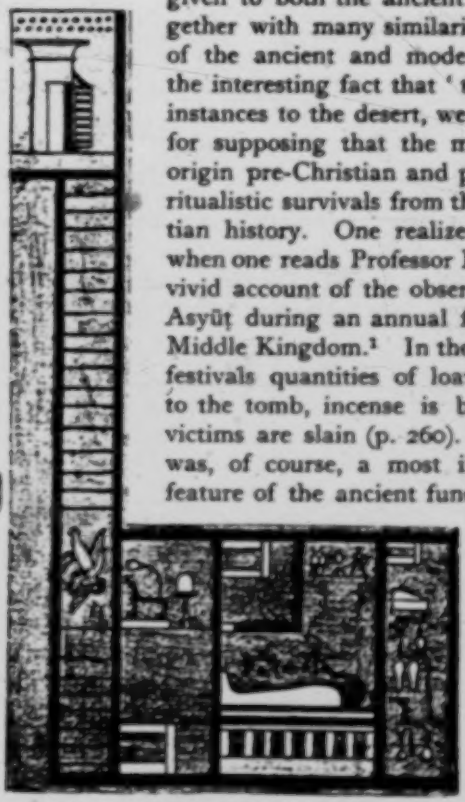

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (London, 1894), p. 198.

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *Ṭala'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaiḥap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korân, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.

[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

778 the patron saint of the village, who is called 'Sheikh' or 'Wali' or 'Sidi' So-and-So.

The monument usually stands outside the built-up area, often close to a well or a canal and shaded by trees, which are themselves the objects of veneration. It consists as a rule of a cubical building about twenty feet square, topped by a dome (*qubba*), and whitewashed all over. The sheikh's body does not always lie within. There may be only [782] an empty tomb surrounded by palm branches, candles, shreds of cloth, bits of hair, and harvest offerings. The caretaker of the tomb is maintained by the community, or by the income of a pious foundation (*waqf*). His post is often hereditary.

796 The day of the *mulid*, or anniversary of the holy man, 527 is a great holiday for the villagers. All of them make their way to the holy spot and go through the traditional ceremonies — dances, circuit of the tomb, and incantations (¹⁰).

764 The resting-place of the dead is some distance from the homes of the living. The cemetery is always a piece of waste land, unfit for cultivation, on the débris of an abandoned village (*tell* or *kom*), or on the sand below the cliffs at the desert edge. Sometimes, as at Minia, it lies on the other side of the Nile. The village of the dead is made up of separate tombs packed closely one against the other. They may be rectangular cemented blocks with pillars at head and foot, or simply mounds sprinkled all over with white pebbles or marked by two rough stones or a couple of vertical palm branches which are renewed every year. There are no in- [769] scriptions and no flowers, but every family knows where its dead are buried, and comes to visit them on the first day of the Great Bairam, when the whole village goes off to the cemetery to honour the dead and to feast and make holiday [527] over their tombs. On that day the village is as empty and deserted as it is in October, when everyone has gone out to pick the cotton.

361 It is not yet time for us to go inside the village. In 312 artists' pictures of Egyptian villages there is always a pool 311 to reflect the dull mass of houses with its coronet of trees. 316 In reality this pool is a large greenish pond of stagnant water, as poisonous as it is picturesque. Nearly every village has one, almost out of necessity. To build houses, make bricks, engineer a watercourse or strengthen a dyke, local

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13 ●
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (*), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

C F 765 769 ● C F 292 505] C F 152 302 987]

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

C F 782] C F 265 443] 764

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

C F 764

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [947]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 734 765 769 735

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

To the Saint of Ṭanṭa.

8.

Es-Seiyid (Master or literally the Master) Aḥmed el-Bedawi is the celebrated saint, whose grave lies in the city of Ṭanṭa in the Delta (compare No. 39). On his birthday (Mûlid), which is celebrated yearly by high masses, a flood of visitors from afar, is drawn hither. In the festal decorations at this time, as on all other such occasions in Egypt, little lamps take a prominent place beside the gay pennants. Ll. 3—5 describe the building covering the tomb of the saint.

Ya Seiyid, yalla ya Seiyid!
Ya bâb in-nabi, ya Seiyid,
Yabu 'atabe ḫaḍra, ya Seiyid,
Yabu ḳabbe faḍḍa, ya Seiyid,
Yabu bâb mezauwa', ya Seiyid!
Win 'îšt ana lagî-lak, ya Seiyid,
wa'id 'anadîlak, ya Seiyid!

O Seiyid, on! Seiyid!
Thou door to the Prophet, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the green threshold, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the silver latch, O Seiyid,
Thou, with the gay-colored door, O Seiyid!
And if I live, I shall come to thee, O Seiyid,
And light thy lamps, O Seiyid!

1. The saint is mediator between mankind and the Prophet, as the latter is between mankind and God; compare No. 1, l. 1.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast, the first for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green, and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes, their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty, equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a happy new year, though the new year will not come for three months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer made from barley, and called *bûza*. Everybody serving another in any capacity on this day receives from his master a money present or at least a new garment. The women also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, however, as the second day of the feast some persons who are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell;

[i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

796 [169] while those who have lost some one dear to them recall him or her to their thoughts, proceed to the cemetery (especially the women), stick a palm branch into the grave mound, distribute pastry and alms, and even pass the night there with their family.

The other feast follows three months after. It is called the Great Feast or Feast of Offering, and lasts for four days, but is really the smaller feast. The baking, cannon-firing, receiving of visitors, embracing, congratulating, and dressing go on as at the little feast; the festive gaiety is, however, dulled, and is not so universal as after the Ramadan. The chief ceremony on this occasion is the eating of "offering flesh" in memory [782] of the offering of Abraham. Every believer *must* have his [262] piece of meat on this day, and anyone who cannot procure it for himself receives it from his richer neighbours, each of whom offers a sheep for every member of his family. The native Christians abstain from flesh on this day out of opposition. [988] This is the most brilliant period of the pilgrimage in Mecca.

FEAST OF THE SAINTS.

796 In the middle of the month Shaaban, which precedes
796 Ramadan, is celebrated the great annual jubilee (a kind of wakes), when every town that can claim to have had a saint of any note, having chosen him as its patron, honours his memory by some kind of festive demonstration—the saint having been a man gifted by God with miraculous power, not necessarily on account of great piety, but oftener as a compensation for harmless and innocent imbecility. The [174] ancient Egyptians also had their patrons and protectors, namely, special divinities or forms and varieties of such for 796 particular cities. In Upper Egypt the chief festival is that of the Sheikh Abder-Rahim at Keneh; it is for Upper Egypt [184] what the celebrated fair at Tantah is for Lower Egypt. The latter is evidently a continuation of the ancient Egyptian feast of Diana at Bubastis, or is analogous to it. From the beginning [1178] of the month onwards some bustle prevails round the temple

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not Processed]